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1905-1906

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MISSION NEWS.

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1. Reports of the educational and evangelistic work of the Mission.
2. News-Letters from the various Stations, giving details of personal work.
3. Incidents, showing results of evangelistic work in the life and character of individuals.
4. Field Notes, consisting of items of interest from all parts of the field.
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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AMERICAN BOARD'S JAPAN MISSION.

THE GENERAL SITUATION.

By far the most important feature of the past year has been the move towards independence on the part of the Japanese churches. It has not been confined to any one group of Christians, though it has been most pronounced in the Congregational and Presbyterian groups.

The movement has its origin in the self-respecting manhood of the people and their right ambition to be recognised as the equals of any other people. The Japanese realise that in many respects they are behind the most advanced and progressive peoples but they feel that this is due not to any inherent inferiority on their part, nor inherent superiority on the part of other peoples, but entirely to their former isolation which prevented them from sharing in, and contributing to, the advancing civilisation of the world. For fifty years they have bent every energy to recover the ground thus lost, with results that have astonished the world but not themselves. The success that has crowned their efforts is clearly shown by the fact that the leading nations of the world have raised their legations in Japan to embassies.

Having thus won a position of equality among the leading nations, the Japanese naturally and rightly wish to do away with everything that would even suggest that they are in any way inferior to other nations. The very existence of organised groups of foreigners in their midst, carrying on religious work that is largely dependent on foreigners for leadership and financial support, gives a very strong suggestion of inferiority along religious lines. They therefore wish to do away with these organised groups of foreigners.

The steps that the Japanese are taking to accomplish this purpose show clearly the growth of the people and the fact that they have learned the lessons of past experience. Instead of trying to accomplish it by force and self-isolation, they would do it by internal growth, by themselves becoming able to carry forward the work which is now so largely in the hands of the foreigner and under his control. They desire and seek the counsel and help of the foreigner but this must be given as from a friend and equal, final control and guidance being left in their own hands.

Thus many changes in the methods of mission work are rapidly being brought about. The methods which were necessary, and the only ones which could be employed, in the beginnings of the work, and until very recent years, are no longer suitable. The time for "extra-territorial" Christianity in Japan is rapidly drawing to an end, if it has not already passed. Missions and missionaries are being tested. They have accomplished a mighty work in the past and it is in their power to do an even greater work in the present and immediate future. Will they meet the test and rise to the opportunity that is theirs?

A second feature of the past year has been the work of the Y.M.C.A. among the soldiers. Previous to the war, although a number of officers were Christians and there were Christians in the rank and file, Christian work was rigidly excluded from the army. An officer has stated that there was a fear that if Christian work were permitted in the army it might endanger the existence of the State.

Several months after the actual outbreak of the war, permission was granted for the beginning of Y.M.C.A. work for the soldiers at one or two important points. It was understood by all that the work was on trial and that no other organised Christian work would be allowed.

The work thus begun, speedily commended itself to the authorities. Permission to open work at other points was granted and all possible facilities and courtesies extended. The highest officers sent appreciative testimonials and the Emporer donated ten thousand *yen* to the work.

Two facts show that the Y.M.C.A. has won a permanent place in the army, first,—It is allowed to establish a permanent branch in Port Arthur; second,—When, with the return of the soldiers, the Y.M.C.A. secretary in charge called on the commanding officer to bid farewell and thank him for past courtesies, the fact that the work was being brought to a close was made known to the Military Governor. He at once said

that the work met a great need and must not be given up. He then gave a thousand *yen* for the work if they would continue it at the more important points. As a result a permanent post has been established in Liao Yang. Here, as in Port Arthur, the military authorities have given a building for the work and are putting it in repair. It is hoped and expected that a post will also be established at a third point.

The first fact shows that the Y.M.C.A. has won the confidence of those in control of the army and the second fact shows that it has won the cordial support of the officers and army as a whole.

The third feature of the past year has been the signs of a great wave of religious feeling quietly spreading over the nation. This has been due to a number of causes, among which may be more especially mentioned, the earnest mission work of the past, the Y.M.C.A. work in the army, and the deepening sense of responsibility and seriousness, together with the great burden of sorrow, caused by the war. This third feature of the general situation is well stated in the following quotation from the JAPAN TIMES. "It is a common thing to hear it remarked among a section of our own nationals as well as foreigners, that this country is soon to be overtaken by a great wave of religious feeling.—There may be some truth in saying that the nation is developing a tendency on the part of its maturing and rising generation to enquire soberly into the secret of *anshin ritsumei*,—how to follow life's vocation with the soul in perfect peace.—It is among the thinking class that the need of a religion is beginning to be felt."

The chief features of the general situation of mission work in Japan may then be summed up first, in a very clearly defined and sane movement on the part of the Japanese Christians toward independence in religious matters; second, in the place that the Y.M.C.A. has won in the army, and therefore in the nation; third, in the very evident signs of a deep religious feeling widely manifest among the people, accompanied by especial earnest enquiry and realisation of need on the part of the thinking class.

SOCIOLOGICAL WORK.

This work is chiefly carried on in the two stations of Matsuyama and Okayama. In the former station Miss Judson has, for many years, conducted a Night and Industrial School in one of the poorer quarters of the city, giving an opportunity, to the children who work all day, to get a little education and the Factory Girl's Home has, in a few years, become permanently established. In the latter station the work is carried forward in what is really a social settlement, with medical dispensary, and in the widely known Orphan asylum.

The Matsuyama Factory Girl's Home has had an intensely interesting history. It has grown out of the conversion of one man, Mr. Omoto. Cast out of his home by his parents, he was first touched by the Gospel message in a preaching service that was being held opposite a wine shop that he frequented. After his conversion he entered a factory as a means of making an honest living. Step by step, from the humblest position, he has won the confidence and respect of his employers and been advanced to a position of permanent responsibility.

Seeing the deplorable conditions under which the factory girls lived and worked he determined to do what he could to better them. At every step he has asked and received the counsel and assistance of the American Board missionaries in Matsuyama and thus the Home has become permanently established on land and in buildings of its own. Its work has received wide, official recognition, the factory authorities are contributing to its support, and its influence is extending throughout that whole section of Japan, bringing the people to a willing recognition of Christianity in every day life. Some of the parents have consented to their daughter's working in the factories only on condition that they be received in the Home. The Home is exerting an influence that mere preaching cannot exert, as well as accomplishing a great work for the improvement of the conditions of the factory girls.

The work in Hanabatake, one of the poorest districts in Okayama, has been pushed vigorously. A school for the younger children has been carried on with the help of Normal School students who are glad of the practice it gives them in teaching. A dispensary is carried on with the aid of several hospital physicians and two pharmacists who freely give of

their time to the work. A Sunday School and other Christian meetings are also maintained. The character of the entire district has been so changed that the work has received the commendation of the police officials.

The Okayama Orphanage is in no sense a mission institution, being entirely in the hands of the Japanese, but it is so closely affiliated with the work of the Okayama Station, one of the missionaries giving a large share of his time in assisting in the Orphanage work and in procuring funds for it, that it may properly be mentioned in this report.

The event of the year has been the receiving of over one thousand children from the famine districts of northern Japan. This addition has taxed the utmost resources of the institution and those in control of it. The greatest number of children heretofore has been under four hundred. New buildings and great quantities of supplies have had to be purchased trebling the running expenses. Many friends have made generous contributions but many more are needed. (Since the above was written the number of children has increased to twelve hundred and the most immediate needs for funds have been met by a grant from the famine relief funds.)

EDUCATIONAL WORK.

The great event of the past year, along educational lines, has been the complete reconciliation of the two factions in the Doshisha alumni and the uniting of all the friends of the institution to carry forward the work on the lines originally planned by the first president, the loved and lamented Neesima. This is a result that has been prayed for, for many years, but it has often seemed as if a generation would have to pass away before it could be accomplished.

The separation between the two groups seemed as wide or wider than ever when, last October, it culminated in some severe criticism by some of the alumni. A committee from the two groups was appointed to investigate the actual state of affairs. The investigation showed both parties that there was no real reason why they should not unite in loyally supporting their alma mater in making it what its founder desired it to be.

At a special meeting of the trustees five new members were elected to their number and the finance committee enlarged by the addition of two of the new trustees. All departments of the institution seem to be in a very prosperous condition. Over seven hundred students are enrolled, a larger number than there has been for many years.

An interesting fact in connection with the Doshisha comes from Niigata. Mr. Curtis writes,—"A young man whom I recently baptised, wished to enter the Doshisha and prepare for the ministry. His parents, who had other plans for their son, decided to seek legal advice as to the nature of Christianity and the standing of the Doshisha. They were assured by the Public Procurator and the Judge of the District Court that Christianity was a good thing; that the Doshisha was an institution of high rank and excellent reputation; and that they would be making no mistake in allowing their son to attend such a school." This testimony, coming from men not professedly Christian, is one indication of the attitude of the educated and thinking men of the country toward Christianity and the position of influence to which a Christian educational institution has attained.

Of equal importance with the events in Doshisha have been the far-reaching developments that have taken place in connection with Kobe (Girls) College. Unlike the Doshisha which, in all its departments, with the possible exception of the Theological Department, is entirely in Japanese hands and controlled by them, Kobe College has been entirely under the control of the Mission, subject to the approval of the Woman's Board of the Interior.

The problems connected with the growth of the college have been so many and perplexing that the Mission placed the whole matter in the hands of a carefully chosen committee and asked the Woman's Board to send out a deputation to assist in deciding them. This the Board did and a committee of three ladies visited Japan, carefully investigated mission conditions, especially on the educational side, and greatly assisted in determining the future policy of the work and position of Kobe College.

Questions connected with the possible moving of the college were settled by leasing a piece of land almost adjoining the present property. The ground is being prepared, both on this new piece and on the land already owned, and some of the much needed new buildings will be erected in the course of the coming year. Steps have also been taken

toward the forming of a more permanent committee than there has been in the past, which shall have a more complete directing control of the school. The total enrollment of students for the past year has been two hundred and thirty-five while two hundred and fifty-two are on the rolls for the present year. Of this number twenty-three are Bible School students who take music only in Kobe College.

Next in importance has been the taking over, by the Mission, of the Matsuyama Girl's School. For several years it has been a question whether the Mission could assume the control and financial support of this school. Heretofore it has not seemed possible but with the return of Miss Judson the problem of teaching and guidance seems to have been solved. The school has been practically united with the higher department of the Night and Industrial School which Miss Judson already had well in hand. The work of this latter school has assumed fresh vigor and the two schools, brought into close relations with each other, form a strong educational, moral, and evangelistic force in that part of Japan.

Another important event has been the return of Miss Howe to carry on the work of the Kindergarten Training School in Kobe. This has been one of the most important schools of its kind in all Japan. So great is the demand for its graduates that it is impossible to fully meet it. The Kindergarten that is carried on in connection with it has all the children it can accommodate and a long list of children waiting their turn to enter.

For the two years and a half that Miss Howe has been absent it has been very difficult to carry on the school for no one could be found to take permanent and entire control and it was feared that the school would have to be given up. Now, however, the school is once more on a sure footing but it imperatively needs a larger and better equipment in buildings, books, and Kindergarten material if the school is to continue to hold the commanding position that it now holds and adequately meet the opportunities that lie before it.

Work in the other schools and Kindergartens with which the Mission is connected, has been carried on as heretofore. The Kindergartens, as usual, have all the children they can accommodate and long lists of waiting children. Opportunity far exceeds the means with which to meet it.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

All other branches of the Mission work are but tributary to the evangelistic work, forming the starting point for it and the means for carrying it out in practical life and character building. All efforts possible are put forth to lead those with whom the missionaries come in contact, to the source of all life, and truth, and being. Bible classes of all kinds in connection with the sociological, educational, and more formal preaching and touring work are held, almost every member of the Mission having from one to four or five such classes a week. Sunday Schools are carried on at almost every preaching place and often where there are no regular preaching places.

There are two chief reasons which render efficient evangelistic work and the establishing of strong churches very difficult. One is the migratory tendency of the people and the other is the great lack of funds for even work that has been well begun.

It is but natural that much of the work is carried on amongst the young people, largely among the students. They are the most easily reached and they are the ones whose minds and beliefs are still in a plastic state and more receptive of new light and truth than the older generations. Moreover students are not settled in their life work, and, as in America, often go far from home to attend the higher educational institutions.

Furthermore, in some parts of the country, especially in the northern part, even the older generations are not thoroughly settled, there being quite a strong movement of the population to uninhabited and undeveloped districts. This movement has been much accentuated by the famine in the northern provinces of the main island, many hundred families moving to the country north of Sapporo.

But the chief difficulty in the evangelistic work is the lack of funds with which to carry it on. A year ago one station, where a strong and promising work had been sustained for many years, had to be dropped. During the past year but a few brief tours were possible in the whole Tottori district. In other stations also, especially in the province of Echigo, many promising places have had to be abandoned. This is the one discouraging feature of the work and the one that is hardest for the workers to bear.

The work that has been done by the Y.M.C.A. in the army, and the hospital and Red Cross work of the missionaries, is being felt in the evangelistic work. It is not at all uncommon for an enquirer to state that he was first touched by the work of these agencies and led to a desire to know more of Christian truth and teaching.

The chief event in the evangelistic work of the past year has unquestionably been the taking over, on the part of the independent Kumiai (Congregational) Churches, of the financial support and control of thirty churches that had formerly been dependent on the Mission. This is in line with the movement, on the part of the Japanese, to assume the control of all the Christian work that is carried on in the country, as was mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this report.

The Mission most cordially welcomes this movement for it is but the consummation of the policy which it has always followed in Japan. From the very beginning the Mission has done all it could to lead on and encourage the Japanese to become self-supporting in religious matters. Its chief object has been to bring into being, churches that were entirely self-supporting and self-directing. It has rejoiced in the fact that during its thirty-five years of work more than fifty such churches have been established through its aid and that five more were added to the number during the past year.

Through the aid of the Mission educational plants have been established and given over entirely into the control of the Japanese, the missionaries continuing their relations to the schools as members of the faculties on an equal footing with the other Japanese teachers. The most widely known of these institutions has been the Doshisha with all its departments.

That the independent churches have, in such a few years, become so firmly established as to adequately provide for all their own work and make the attempt to sufficiently aid the larger groups of their fellow-Christians who are not yet able to walk entirely alone, is cause for great rejoicing. It will take a little time for the churches and missionaries to fully adjust themselves to the new duties and relations involved in the step that has been taken but such adjustments, on a smaller scale, have been successfully made in the past and there is no reason why they should not be successfully made in the present instance.

The most cordial relations exist between the Mission and the Japanese. Different missionaries are constantly invited to conduct the

communion and baptismal services in the different churches, to carry on Bible classes, and share in the different lines of church work. They are asked to become members of the school faculties or serve on the Boards of Trustees and on important committees. Their advice and counsel is welcomed and sought. They have it in their power to exert a far-reaching formative influence and force on Christian work and education in Japan.

IMPORTANT NOTES.

In the death of Mrs. Atkinson, on the eighteenth of last April, the Mission was called to mourn the loss of one of its earliest and most faithful members. For thirty-three years she had been connected with Kobe Station and was widely known and loved in the city and in the places reached by that Station.

Considerable publication work has been done during the past year. Dr. Learned's revised New Testament commentaries have been completed through the Book of Acts and he is now engaged on a revised edition of his Church History, for which a special call has been made. A number of tracts and articles have been published and "MORNING LIGHT" and "MISSION NEWS" have been issued as usual.

The Woman's Evangelistic School rejoices in the removal of one of the first buildings erected by the Mission, which was first used as a printing office and later turned into an ill-adapted dormitory for the school. In its place there has been erected a neat, convenient, and hygienic building to be used as a refectory and dormitory.

Another fact worthy of note is that a graduate of the Doshisha has made a gift to his alma mater, the interest from which is to be used in aiding needy students. Also the graduates, present members, and friends of the Doshisha have united in creating a one thousand *yen* fund as a tribute of respect to Dr. Learned who has just completed thirty years of service in the Doshisha. This fund, through Dr. Learned, has been given to the Doshisha and the interest is to be used for needy students.

The Kumiai Churches, in co-operation with whom the Mission works, publishes the following statistics,—total number churches 102;

preaching places 11; pastors 57; evangelists 39; church members 10,989; baptisms 927; Bible women 11; Sunday school scholars 6,221; total contributions 59,450.00 *yen*.

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